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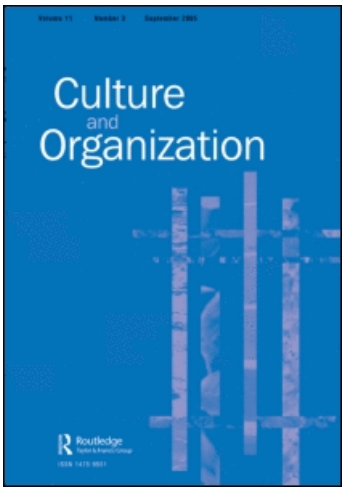
Kingma, S.F.

published in
Culture & Organization
2008

DOI (link to publisher)
10.1080/14759550701863324

document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record



Culture and Organization
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713649882

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Online Publication Date: 01 March 2008

To cite this Article Kingma, Sytze F.(2008)'Dutch casino space or the spatial organization of entertainment',Culture and Organization,14:1,31 — 48
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/14759550701863324
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14759550701863324

Culture and Organization
Vol. 14, No. 1, March 2008, 31–48

Dutch casino space or the spatial organization of entertainment

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(*Received 1 September 2005; final version received 16 August 2006*)

The spatial organization of casinos is closely associated with entertainment. This article analyzes the spatial dynamics regarding the segregation, confinement and concentration of gambling games within Dutch casinos. Casino space is analyzed following Lefebvre's (1991) three-part dialectic of 'perceived space', 'conceived space' and 'lived space'. It is argued that casino space is deeply involved in defining casino entertainment. At the same time the (re)definition of gambling as entertainment affects the construction of casino space. This reciprocal process concerns many aspects, ranging from urban planning and architecture, via advertising, access policies and the arrangement of gambling areas, to the servicing and surveillance of gamblers by casino personnel. Although casinos are predominantly perceived as entertainment facilities, this is a heavily managed image. However, what exactly constitutes entertainment in the context of casino gambling is not self-evident and in many respects controversial. This article highlights the ambiguous nature of entertainment and casino space.

Keywords: gambling; casinos; entertainment; space; organizational; culture; sociology

1. Introduction

Historically gambling has been an extremely controversial category of play. The objections against gambling can be manifold. Gambling has been religiously condemned and has been considered economically unproductive and incompatible with the protestant work ethic. Gambling has also been closely associated with risks of addiction and crime. Following such objections many states have historically condemned gambling organizations, and sought to prohibit or tightly regulate commercial gambling places like casinos.

The central control strategies of casinos involve spatial strategies regarding the segregation, confinement and concentration of gambling games. Segregation in the case of casinos can go as far as (attempts at) elimination. The archetypical Venetian *casini* and *ridotti*, the many private gambling rooms which were opened during the carnival season, were banned after 1628 (Padoan Urban 1985). Because this ban wasn't very effective, a single public gambling house, of which the proceeds were for the treasury, was opened in Venice in 1638. In France in the early nineteenth century Napoleon tried to close down the popular gambling rooms of the Palais Royal, but in 1806 he legalized and taxed a limited number of casinos in Paris and some watering places (Barnhart 1991). As these examples indicate, the ban on casinos was almost never complete. However, casinos were in many cases seriously marginalized and restricted either to the illegal and criminal side of society or to a limited number of exceptional places where casinos were permitted, serving the interests of tourism and the state. In particular these last 'places on the margin' (Shields 1990), of which in Europe the Mediterranean city state of Monte Carlo, in America the desert state of

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ISSN 1475-9551 print/ISSN 1477-2760 online

DOI: 10.1080/14759550701863324
http://www.informaworld.com

Nevada and in Asia the Portuguese Colony of Macau, served as places of refuge, enabled casino enterprises to evolve into a modern entertainment industry.

In the post World War II period gambling markets in many countries were gradually legalized. Especially during the 1990s gambling markets have been further liberalized and expanded significantly. The visibility of gambling increased, by sensational advertising, the establishment of luxurious amusement arcades and casinos at top locations, and spectacular gaming shows on the television. Gambling places and products became almost ubiquitous, and the returns and profits of most gambling markets grew enormously. This expansion wave is a virtually global phenomenon (Eadington and Cornelius 1997, McMillen 1996, Reith 2002).

In the Netherlands, the country we will focus on, this wave included the expansion of the number of legal casinos, the establishments of the state monopoly *Holland Casino*, from 3 to 12. This expansion, however, didn't imply a slackening of the spatial control over gambling. On the contrary, this article starts from the idea that precisely the tight spatial control over casinos, and over the gambling games within casinos, serves as a precondition for the exploitation of modern gambling games. Moreover, this control favors a certain cultural meaning of gambling, that is gambling as a form of entertainment and fun, and counters criminal involvement in gambling and gambling excesses related to addiction or gambling for purely monetary gain. For example, *Holland Casino* banned from its blackjack tables professional players, the so called 'card counters'. *Holland Casino* also developed anti-addiction policies. These strategies contribute to the normalization and commoditization of gambling as an entertainment product, which in its turn can be considered functional in the context of an affluent consumer society. Following this spatial logic the exploitation of gambling as entertainment is segregated from the wider society and confined to the premises of casinos.

2. Place-making

In this article I want to argue that the spatial logic about the confinement of entertainment is better treated as a result of the analysis than as a starting point. The segregation and confinement of gambling games is not only or necessarily related to the idea of gambling for fun. Nor is the idea of confinement self-evident. Various strategies of spatial regulation apply to gambling markets. These markets cannot be pictured as uniform and unambiguous. While gambling in casinos and amusement arcades is tightly controlled, in the Netherlands slot-machines in restaurants and the organization of charity bingo is less supervised and less strictly segregated from other social activities (Kingma 1997).

The spatial dynamics behind the confinement of gambling are difficult to fathom without a closer examination of the actors and organizations involved in the making of gambling places. In this case, the confinement of gambling is considered a social construction (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Douglas 1970), where in specific cases qualifications of the 'appropriate place' and 'entertainment-value' of gambling activities are the outcome of negotiations and dispute between diverging parties linking specific definitions of what they feel is appropriate to their power relations. The allocation of casinos and the organization of gambling games are influenced by the subjective and political appreciation of gambling and the (corporate) identities of gambling enterprises. This became clear, for instance, when in 1983 the government decided to expand the number of *Holland Casino* after a period in which the identity of this casino operator had been spoiled by serious problems with fraud, and at a time when there also appeared, more or less condoned, the so-called Golden Ten casinos. However, government considered *Holland Casino* a more professional and reliable casino organization that also offered guarantees for consumer protection. The Golden Ten casinos, which evaded the law by claiming to exploit a game of skill instead of a game of chance, were considered illegal and criminal by many, but not by all public authorities (Kingma 2004b).

Although space has primarily been perceived simply as a material context for organizational analysis, space is also a socio-cultural phenomenon which is part and parcel of the social construction of casinos. At least, if we do not treat space only as a material issue but, as Bruno Latour advocates from the standpoint of actor-network-theory (ANT), if we also concentrate on the social strategies behind the spatial arrangements of casinos and the social consequences that follow (Latour 1987). From this perspective we can better appreciate the various cultural meanings assigned to and associated with casinos, as well as the power relations involved in their construction. In a way abstract space becomes concrete place through the exertion of power and the investment with meaning. An ANT like approach also draws our attention to the reproduction of boundaries within and between organizations (Lee and Hassard 1999). Regarding the social dimensions of space, I am both considering the question of how places come into being and how places matter for social practices (Gieryn 2000). How are casinos made and how do casinos influence gambling practices? Following Gieryn (2000), the social organization of activities in space is a process of 'place-making', which involves three mutually related but analytically distinct features: geographical locations, material forms and investments with meaning and value. These features seem to reflect Henri Lefebvre's spatial dimensions from *The production of space* (Lefebvre 1991).

Lefebvre's distinctions can be helpful in understanding the 'mutual enactment of the material and the social' in organizational analysis (Dale 2005). His conceptualization of space can be regarded as a translation of power and meaning in spatial terms and address the ontologically quite different ways actors relate to space. Lefebvre distinguishes between: spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation (Shields 1999, Watkins 2005). Spatial practice concerns the (re)production in everyday life of the places and spatial 'ensembles' appropriate to each social formation. Important is the commonsensical character of spatial practice, also referred to as 'perceived space'. The representations of space concern the discourses on space of professional actors like planners, architects and engineers and are also addressed as 'conceived space'. Important is the link between the professional discourses and the mode of production. The spaces of representation are referred to by Lefebvre as fully 'lived space'. This conception of space is reflexive and concerns the 'social imaginary'. Important are the re-coded versions of space and criticisms of the dominant social order. While conceived space is particularly relevant for the analysis of power relations, lived space is highly relevant for the analysis of new or alternative meanings of space. As a three-part dialectic the three dimensions work together, but can also contradict each other. Lived space can be seen as a consequence of the confrontation between spatial practice and certain professional accounts of space, but it also can be seen as a condition for (changes of) our daily spatial routines. This article deals with such dynamics of place-making and the contribution of casino organizations to gambling places.

The dynamics of place-making in the case of Dutch casinos take shape in the context of a specific regime of regulation for gambling. In *The Gambling Complex* (Kingma 2002) I have analyzed this regime in terms of the 'risk model'. Typical features of the risk model are: (a) a liberal political consensus on the legitimacy of gambling as commercial entertainment; (b) acknowledgement of the economical importance of the gambling sector; (c) control of gambling markets, primarily to confront the risks of addiction and crime. The rise of the risk model is part of a 'paradigm shift' in regulation and signals a new phase in the overall process of *autonomization* or *commoditization* of gambling, a change which claims pleasure as a primary motive for gambling behavior and an expanding commercial gambling sector that has a growing share in and influence on society at large (Kingma 2002, 2004a). Spatially this process means that casinos (a) acquire a prominent place in the urban landscape, (b) are sharply segregated from the urban environment and (c) confine gambling to the premises of the casino, in which gambling games can be managed relatively independent of local governments.

The liberalisation of gambling implies major changes in the relation between gambling and the state, and involves the legitimation of gambling activities and enterprises (Cosgrave and Klassen 2001, Kingma 1996). This also includes a crucial shift in the meanings attributed to gambling, a shift from gambling as a morally disputed vice towards gambling as an acceptable entertainment product or leisure time pursuit. For the purpose of cultural analysis I am specifically concerned with the way place-making is related to the cultural valuation and signification of casino gambling (Kingma 1997). As an entertainment product, gambling is less signified through the instrumental rationale of 'easy money' and more through the expressive rationale of playful pleasure and life-style identities. As such, the rationale of winning is related to the euphoria of winning generated in the momentary act on the gambling spot. Then the valuation of money is confined to the time-spatial enclave of the gambling encounter. Various theorists of play and gambling have stressed this confinement together with a vicarious appreciation of gambling. Johan Huizinga, notably, defined playful gambling in terms of highly segregated rituals pursued for their own sake and very different from 'ordinary life'(Huizinga 1938). And as stipulated by Goffman (1972 [1967]), who stresses 'character contests' and identity formation in gambling, it is not the transaction of the gamble but the action of gambling that is important. What is consequential in gambling for fun is not so much the amount of money you win, but rather the amount of money you can afford to lose. This loss is the price paid for having a good time. What seems particularly meaningful are the *illusions* of risk, profits and and luxury. In this respect casino space can very well be regarded as a 'heterotopia', a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites of a culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted (Foucault 1986). Casinos can, for that matter, also be regarded as highlights in 'the age of simulation' (Baudrillard 1990), in which the distinctions between the real and the imaginary are fading, especially if we take the Las Vegas casinos in mind. The positive (re)definition of gambling as exciting entertainment is stressed by a controversy over vocabulary. Respectable operators denominate their industry by 'entertainment', 'guests' and 'customers' rather than 'gambling' and 'gamblers', as these last words carry connotations of excessive and irresponsible gambling for money. Therefore, they also prefer the word 'gaming' over 'gambling'. However, the 'euphemization' of gambling – the redefinition of gambling as entertainment and fun – is controversial and part of a social and spatial construction in which gambling organizations try to encode ideal consumer behavior in their facilities.

In this article I do not claim to present a more or less complete account of the interactions between Lefebvre's spatial dimensions in the case of Dutch casinos. I rather want to explore how certain aspects of these dimensions are involved in the spatial (re)production of casinos as entertainment facilities. The analysis is based on discourse analysis regarding gambling policies and organizational strategies, observations in and of casinos in urban settings as well as various interviews with casino managers and personnel. The empirical material this article draws on covers an extended period of time from the early 1990s onwards and was generated as part of several research projects dealing more generally with gambling regulations and organizations in the Netherlands (Kingma 2002). For this article the empirical material on Dutch casinos was analyzed in an explicit spatial framework and updated to approximately 2004.

The overall objective of this article is to offer an analysis of the way space is involved in the social construction of casino gambling as commercial entertainment. The logic of the article is as follows. First, the exterior appearance of casinos is discussed as an aspect of 'perceived' space. This stresses the high visibility and prominent placement of casinos in the urban landscape and the associated crowd practices. Second, the 'conceived space' of casinos is discussed regarding the advertisements, the accessibility and the interior design of casinos. This highlights the sharp separation of the casino from the urban environment and from 'ordinary life'. Third, I explore the 'lived space' of casinos from the standpoint of casino personnel, in particular regarding servicing and surveillance. This stresses the concentration and confinement of gambling games within the

casino. Since, as argued by Lefebvre himself (Shields 1999; Soja 1996), the triadic elements have to be taken into consideration in mutual interaction, I will discuss how each aspect is, or could be, related to the other Lefebvrian spatial dimensions in order to get an understanding of the role space is playing in (re)defining gambling as entertainment.

3. Perceived space: planning and architecture

A prominent aspect of 'perceived space', the first of Lefebvre's spatial dimensions, is the way we can encounter a casino in our everyday journeys through (urban) space. In such an encounter we may perhaps intuitively admire the casino, enter it, ignore it or turn our backs. Whatever our response, the casino building can in one way or another be part of our daily or occasional routines. For the integration of casinos in our spatial practice it matters significantly how casinos are located in urban space and what they look like.

Illegal casinos are located and more or less hidden in existing buildings, usually on marginal urban places. Even the first legal Dutch casinos, opened in the nineteen seventies, were set up in existing buildings like the Kurhaus-hotel in Scheveningen (1979). Also the casinos of Rotterdam and Amsterdam were initially set up in already existing buildings, both in a Hilton hotel. This indicates a limited spatial autonomy of the casino, which is not sharply segregated from its environment. In the most literal sense the casino as such is subsidiary to its environment. For the integration in spatial practice this implies that an illegal casino will only be recognized by those who have explicit knowledge about its location. It also implies that the casino may be encountered unexpectedly by people who are unaware of its existence.

In this respect the new and purpose built casinos of the nineteen nineties meant a tremendous spatial innovation. For the new establishments *Holland Casino* preferred luxurious buildings with contemporary architecture on prominent locations, to exude a high status. Even so, the design shouldn't be too daring. It had to breathe reliability and conformism so that it doesn't compromise or clash with its direct environment too much. *Holland Casino* attracted several renowned Dutch architects for the design. The new casinos were almost all located in inner city areas. In Rotterdam (1992) and Eindhoven (1993), the casinos were integrated in new indoor shopping centers. In Nijmegen (1989) and Amsterdam (1991), the casinos became part of a new urban redevelopment project with entertainment facilities, waterfronts, shops, terraces, plazas, cafes, restaurants and apartments. An eye-catching contemporary element in the design is the use of light. The luminous buildings emphasize the association between the casino and the city night-life. Local governments gladly welcomed, and in some cases competed for, these casinos because of the architectural enrichment of the urban landscape and the expected employment benefits and economic spin-offs.

The careful tuning to the environment, which entails a great diversity in the architecture of the different establishments of *Holland Casino*, is possible because the *form* and *content* of the casinos is kept separated. The architecture has a mediating role and does not just express the game element and prestige of the casino. The architecture seeks connections with the urban environment and seeks distance from the gambling games. By doing so it acquires an autonomous architectural status. The separation of form and content is markedly clear in the way that *Holland Casino* distances itself from the traditional European casino style; the royal and baroque casino elements which came to the Netherlands under Austrian and French influences. The classic casino, with the casinos of Baden-Baden and Monaco as shining examples, became a cliché. The new casinos do not look like royal palaces with red and green velvet interiors, gold ornaments, crystal chandeliers, decorated mirrors and genre paintings. *Holland Casino* is more and more influenced by the American casino style. The corporate identity of *Holland Casino* is built up from contemporary fabrics and geometrical shapes. For the interior decoration some playful

themes are added that deliberately do not refer to gambling. The split with the classic casino becomes poignantly clear in the new establishment (1995) of the casino of Scheveningen. With the neo-baroque Kurhaus still fresh in our memory we now find an establishment that looks more like a modern cruise ship. The interior is decorated with elements from the beach culture. The separation of form and content enables a sharp distinction between the interior and the exterior of the casino. With the modern interior with beach culture elements in Scheveningen and, for example, with the roman theme fragments in Nijmegen, *Holland Casino* obviously lets go of the classic European casino. With universalistic themes this casino organization seeks to appeal to a large audience. The company also enhanced the subsidiary entertainment facilities because they wanted to be 'typical night life casinos'.

The popularization and thematic appeal of the casinos somewhat resembles the American casino style. The architecture of the American casinos typically breaks with a traditional unity of form and content, allowing the development of the autonomous style which Robert Venturi and others analyze as characteristic for the post-modern architecture of the Las Vegas Strip (Venturi 1977 [1972]). In Las Vegas, the thematic architecture of for instance the Roman Empire, the Egyptian Pyramids, Medieval Castles or the skyline of Manhattan, is extremely important in the fierce competition on the casino market. As theorized by Mark Gottdiener such 'theming' is closely associated with attracting customers and market competition (Gottdiener 2001). Gottdiener notes that the new casino-resorts are drawing most directly on an urban motif. He also notes that the new casino's at the strip distance themselves with their cosmopolitan themes from the traditional Cowboy style casinos of downtown Las Vegas, a process more or less similar to *Holland Casino*'s detachment from the classic European casino style. And in the thematic casino not only gambling products but also the casino space itself is being consumed. The Las Vegas strip has, moreover, not only become a theme park but it also 'has developed features of an urbanized environment in that it nurtures and draws out pedestrian traffic from within the casinos themselves' (Gottdiener 2001, 114). The Las Vegas casinos, in other words, are generating a new kind of city.

Judged by size and development the Dutch casinos cannot compare to the Las Vegas examples. In Vegas the casinos are completely dedicated to tourism. They are the result of a tough competition that is mainly fought out on the level of style and supplementary entertainment. Still, there is a connection. The casino of Nijmegen, for example, does not copy a medieval city but it does refer to the restored medieval townscape of Nijmegen. It may be far-fetched to compare Dutch cityscapes with Disneyland, but the common architectural principle of theming is clear. By adjusting outward appearances to the environment and aiming for a broader public *Holland Casino* clearly takes a step into the direction of the American style of casinos. However, it is still a mix, as some features of the traditional European style are undeniably present. Also, the casinos remain fairly small-scale and orderly. *Holland Casino* does bow towards the American example, but this is more an expression of the same developmental logic than to simply copy a concept. In Las Vegas the resort-casinos colonize exterior space and determine the looks of a city; the Dutch casinos are more adaptive; the city is rather the point of reference for the casino establishments. But just as with the American casinos, the Dutch casino architecture relegates the direct association between gambling games and the casino building to the background. The spectacular and seductive architecture enriches the city, but it conceals the gambling games at the same time. It is fairly irrelevant for architecture (and architects) what exactly goes on inside of a casino. Venturi and others even excuse themselves in their architectural study on Vegas, when they remark: 'Just as an analysis of the structure of a Gothic cathedral need not include a debate on the morality of medieval religion, so Las Vegas's values are not questioned here' (Venturi 1977, 6).

Insofar as I referred in this paragraph to the intentions and strategies of casino management, architects and local officials, I have addressed the conceived rather than the perceived space of

casinos. However, my point is that the new conception of casinos has resulted in a new spatial ensemble regarding casinos that encourages and requires a specific type of urban crowd practice, in which the casino is incorporated and associated with entertainment in the lives of tourists, consumers and ordinary passers-by. I suggest that the prominent placement and theming of casinos reinforces in two ways this cultural meaning of gambling. First, the casinos are identified with a glamorous and enjoyable architecture rather than with the gambling games. The games are separated from the urban environment and represented by a theme, a relatively autonomous architecture with which the casino is identified in everyday life. Second, the casinos are positioned in environments that are intended and designed for consumption and entertainment purposes. This means that the casinos are spatially associated with an encompassing cultural scheme of interpretation, from which the casino can easily be perceived in everyday life as an entertainment facility.

Although I believe that many perceive the Dutch casinos in this way as entertainment facilities, and that this indeed is the dominant mode of perception, this cultural meaning not necessarily corresponds with the fully 'lived space' of casinos; with Lefebvre's 'spaces of representation'. It is quite possible that individuals and groups of people experience the casinos and their architecture with a different or even opposite 'social imaginary'. In this respect I particularly point at the individuals and groups who criticized, and in some cases, notably in Nijmegen and Amsterdam, even resisted, the coming and placement of the new casinos. From the standpoint of ANT these groups should also be regarded as 'relevant social groups' that were part of the formative actor-network of the Dutch casinos. The critique of these groups involved, besides objections against gambling, the casino as a typical capitalist venture, corrupting urban politics and colonizing urban spaces and the life worlds of common citizens. These alternative interpretations and meanings, however, play a marginal and subordinate role in the everyday spatial casino practices.

4. Conceived space: advertising, access and game areas

Prominent aspects of the 'conceived space', the second of Lefebvre's spatial dimensions, of casinos, are the ways gambling games are officially (re)presented in advertisements, in rules and guidelines for access and in the arrangement of gambling areas. These are representations of space constructed out of symbols, codifications and abstract concepts. The conceived space refers to the knowledge and discourses on gambling spaces, which are related to the exploitation of gambling games. This immediately draws our attention to how knowledge and power are related to spatial constructions. In the case of the Dutch casinos the professional discourses almost convulsively propagate the idea of gambling as entertainment.

Advertising

For the Dutch casinos defining casino gambling does not start or stop at the threshold of the casino but reaches out to society as a whole. *Holland Casino* aims to influence its corporate identity in line with the reserved gambling policies. In advertisements and press meetings this company purposefully steps into the light. In its presentations *Holland Casino* ignores the instrumental aspects of gambling and emphasizes the pleasures of the games, and the casino as a classy destination for an entertaining outing. Here we encounter a strong example of the 'euphemization' of gambling.

In advertising the emphasis is on the symbolic meaning of the casino. The slogan *Holland Casino, a feast for your eyes* ['In Holland Casino kom je ogen tekort'] almost reduces a casino visit to a visual experience. This slogan stems from the promotional campaign that was to support the introduction of the uniform house style from 1989 onwards. Advertising the casino is a controversial subject and in 1973 it was, through intercession of parliament, legally restricted to

prevent 'a category of people to be violated in their sense of justice', and that individuals are encouraged to gamble.[1] Any advertising should stick solely to 'factual information'. The legal restrictions are observed in the nineties by abandoning all advertisements that 'encourage excessive gambling' or 'appeal to the pursuit of financial gain in gambling' – so the restrictions are formulated in the 'Advertisement Code for Casino Games' (1991).[2] The euphemization of gambling still has a legal basis because casino advertisements are not allowed to refer to motives of financial gain in gambling. However, in the course of time, the advertising activities have taken a prominent inversion in terms of the initial purpose of this restriction. The reticence no longer concerns the social (external) acceptation of casinos but the (internal) care for customers. *Holland Casino* also gradually extended its advertising campaigns, both in media outlets and contents. In 1995 it added radio and television commercials to its promotional campaign. The new slogan *Holland Casino, a wonderful opportunity for an outing* ['Holland Casino, een mooie gelegenheid om uit te gaan'] rang in all modern media.

In media representations the cultural message of and about the Dutch casinos gradually evolved from moral judgment and casino etiquette towards more documentary and seductive representations, just like we can find for instance in the film *A dreamscape – gambling in America* (1994).[3] Although the documentary does not refrain from critical remarks, it presents various aspects of casinos and gambling in an objectifying manner and leaves the moral conclusions to the subjective interpretation of its audience. We find a similar approach in the quasi-documentary *Dutch roulette* (1997) about *Holland Casino*. One step further in this publicity strategy was the 'Docusoap' *Casino TV* (2001), a kind of reality show in 13 episodes which depicted the everyday life of casino personnel. This TV program was intended to raise the insight of ordinary citizens about casino life, and to present a positive image of *Holland Casino*. It stressed in particular the hard work and friendliness of casino personnel and the high levels of casino security. The TV commercials followed a similar logic, in which conceivable (positive and cheerful) meanings of a casino visit in the personal lives of customers are presented in short humorous sketches.

In comparison with the 1980s, when it could be characterized as almost paranoid, the organizational culture of *Holland Casino* has become more transparent. But the media (re)presentations remain tightly controlled. *Holland Casino* is particularly fearful of negative publicity concerning addiction and crime, with which it is occasionally confronted, for example in 2004, with the allegations by a (former) employee, of laundering money for criminals. And although the Dutch casinos seek to expand their advertising, and make it more explicit, advertising remains a controversial subject. In 2005 government impeded for instance the broadcasting of *Casino Kings*, a TV show sponsored by *Holland Casino*, and ended the sponsoring of the Dutch Premier Soccer League by this company. In these cases either the association with gambling was considered too explicit or the publicity was considered too promotional.

Access

Upon entering the casino the visitor crosses the first and most important line that distinguishes the ordinary citizen from a casino consumer. The Dutch casinos carefully draw and guard this line. To be admitted to the extraordinary world of the casino the visitors have to pass some kind of customs, a 'liminal space' (Turner 1969) to be regarded as a transition zone in which a change of identity takes place. Customers have to register and identify themselves through a passport or driver's license. Even though the casinos can become very crowded and cluttered at the busy hours, *Holland Casino* always knows who are in the house. Next to this, there are the video cameras to monitor individuals inside the casino. The rigorous access policy is legally proscribed to safeguard that the casino admits only adults, over 18s, and to be able to deny access to gamblers, either upon their own request or by order of the casino. This spatial control would not

be necessary if the casino would not represent a normative order that is hard to maintain. The casino walls create a paradoxical freedom of action, since the gamblers feel liberated as the casino is one of the few places where they are allowed to gamble.

Visitors also have to pay a small entrance fee. This transaction underlines that the visitor makes a conscious choice and that the casino is a consumptive facility. Furthermore, the checkpoint gives out two brochures: one about *the rules of the game*, another about *the risks of the game*. In these brochures the casino offers a general description of the intentions of the casino, the various gambling games, of how to behave inside the casino and about the dangers of gambling. In the brochures the Dutch casinos emphasize that gambling in state-owned casinos is always fair and safe, and that the gambling games are meant to experience excitement and pleasure during 'a fun night out'. The brochure also says that in the light of the temptations of gambling 'the visitor is advised to decide on a maximum amount to spend on one casino trip *before* entering the casino'. Thus, at the entrance and in the foyer the guest is (expected to be) informed about the most important elements of the normative order of the casino.

Similarly important is, or rather was, the casino dress code. Appearance and clothing establish a more precise tuning between individuals and the style of the casino. The dress code is a much-discussed subject in the Dutch casinos. This is mainly so because the dress regulations have been relaxed over the years, and were ultimately abandoned in 2000 (at least an explicit dress code). Before, a 'groomed' appearance and 'appropriate' attire was required. The positive criterion of at least 'full dress at night' was, after the required jacket and tie were already abandoned in 1985, replaced by negative criteria of what was *not* allowed, like faded jeans, shorts or sneakers. This relaxing of the dress code was part of the strategy of the Dutch casinos aimed at attracting a broader audience by easing up on the access policy. This relaxation of the dress code can be understood as part of a general 'informalization' of manners that occurred since the 1960s (Wouters 1986). As theorized by Wouters, this informalization of manners typically occurs when the mutual dependencies between social groups increase and the power differences decrease. This process seems to be at the basis of the democratization of the Dutch casinos which are no longer associated with elite culture and have become part of popular culture.

The informalization of the dress code is evident from both a change *of* the dress code, as it relates to notably class cultures (there no longer seems to exist a direct link between social classes and clothing), and a change *in* the dress code, in particular an individualization of the dress code. Judging the acceptability of people's attire no longer depends on official prescriptions and authorities and is more and more dependent on the situation and personal interpretation. To *Holland Casino* the individualization entailed that its visitors find it less acceptable that the casino judges them by their appearance. Therefore, the checking of the public at the entrance, the doorman's most important duty, happens with the greatest prudence. The required clothing – now vaguely indicated as 'appropriate dress' – is subject to permanent change and has become the result of negotiations.

Game area divisions

For the casino as a whole, the game order of the Dutch casinos is threefold, that is to say there are three separate game areas: the slot machine division, the so-called 'jackpot club', the central area for the traditional table games like roulette and black jack and the *cercle privé*, or private room. The ranking between these areas corresponds with the geometry of the building. The architectural hierarchy overlaps the cultural one: the slot machines are at ground level, the table games at the mid level and the *cercle* at the top floor of the building, or in some exclusive side room. The social hierarchy can be read from the popularity, the size and the decoration of the areas and thwarts the cultural hierarchy. In the Dutch casinos the area for traditional table games is by far the most

spacious, and is most central for all possible routes to get around the building. The other two divisions are on either side of the central area and are considerably smaller. The average player density of the rooms reinforces this impression of the social hierarchy. In the Jackpot club the gamblers have the least personal space to play. In the *cercle privé* the casino guards every players' personal space. From a spatial point of view the central area with the table games undoubtedly dominates the big picture. While this area has the middle position in the cultural hierarchy, under the private room and above the popular jackpot club, the central area is on top in the social hierarchy of the Dutch casinos.

In its turn the economic ranking of the gambling areas thwarts both the social and cultural hierarchy of *Holland Casino*. The returns of the slot machines division, introduced in 1986, were in the mid-1990s already as high as those of the table games, but if we calculate the costs of exploitation, which are much higher for table games than they are for slot machines (for this reason *Holland Casino* abandoned French Roulette altogether), the slot machines indeed render the bigger part of the profits of the casinos. In 2004 the slot machines even accounted for 60% of the returns (which totaled Euro 682 million).[4] And although the returns in the central area are considerable, due to the large number of players, the profit from the private room is relatively higher because the stakes are also considerable higher. From this spatial arrangement we can learn that the cultural, social and economic hierarchies of the casino are relatively independent from each other. The relative large share of slot machines also gives the Dutch casinos an American accent, because most European casino organizations are still dominated by table games.

The spatial division of the Dutch casinos, in three game areas, does not run completely parallel to the division of the public, although most players obviously do prefer specific areas and games. To what extent the spatial division of the Dutch casinos overlaps with social and class cultural differences of the visitors, for example in age, education and income, *Holland Casino* can or will not disclose. However, apart from the question of whether the players in the different areas correspond with different social categories, the styles of the divisions, in view of entourage, the games on offer, the stake limits and the gambling behavior are conspicuously different. The casino style can be characterized as a hybrid 'culture of differences' and variations, which is above all noticeable in the distinctions between the three divisions. The casino unites different cultural backgrounds of gambling types under a common denominator and reduces them to stylistic variations. The carefully designed supply of gambling games, starting from the level of the tables and machines, via the arrangement of games within the various divisions, up to the hierarchy of the complete casino, enables visitors to tune their individual gambling behavior to their personal preferences, financial strength or the impressions they want to make. This leads to an enormous variety in gambling behavior within the casino, and makes the casino into a social arena, a meeting place for different social categories in which social distinctions can be challenged or confirmed.

The culture of differences of the Dutch casinos supposes a unique attitude of the players. This is because the normative order of the casino can only be maintained to the point where the players realize that the rewards of the casino are only temporary and limited to the game areas. Players are aware, or will be reminded of it by their gambling activities, that gambling more often ends with losses than with profits. The awareness of the relativity of the luxury, of the risks and of the profits refers to the 'illusion' or 'simulation' as a crucial dimension in the perception of the casino. Indeed, because casino gamblers believe that they can win despite well-known statistical evidence to the contrary, Ritzer and Stillman, who look upon the Las Vegas casino-hotel as paradigmatic of 'the new means of consumption', regard casino gambling as 'self-illusory hedonism in its purest form' (Ritzer and Stillman 2001).

Insofar as I referred in the previous discussion to the perceptions and routines of gamblers and casino visitors, I have addressed the perceived rather than the conceived space of casinos.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the conceived space of casino regulators, managers and designers, as put forward in advertisements, rules of access and the arrangement of game areas, more or less automatically makes consumers behave and believe according to the values, norms and meanings propagated by the casino. As much as road systems and traffic signs do not enforce correct behavior in traffic, the conceived space of casinos does not simply enforce the normative order of gambling as entertainment and fun.

Nevertheless, I do suggest that the conceived space of casinos reinforces in two ways the perception of gambling as entertainment. First, the conceived space of casinos sets constraints on the perception and use of a casino, by defining and privileging gambling behavior that is supposed to be in line with entertainment and silencing perceptions of gambling which are not. The more or less explicit definitions may be called upon if and when a consumer does not move within the margins of the conceived space. In this respect, the tight panoptic control of casino space, by casino management and personnel, gives little room for deviating from the conceived space of casinos. Second, the casino inscribes desirable behavior in its games and spatial arrangements. Just like technological artifacts, casino spaces and gambling equipment contains 'scripts' (Akritch 1992), informing users about what actions should be undertaken, when, where and how. *Holland Casino*, therefore, expects that the larger part of the public will more or less instinctively appreciate and agree with the suggested framework of entertainment and the range of gambling options, as well as comply willingly.

Although I believe that the conception of gambling as entertainment is indeed the leading rationale guiding the development and management of Dutch casinos, as well as the dominant mode of perception, this cultural meaning neither entirely covers nor necessarily corresponds with the fully 'lived space' of casinos. Individuals and groups may experience their visits and gambling behavior in many different and perhaps unexpected ways dependent on the way they integrate their casino visit in their life styles. Gamblers may also experience the casinos with a 'social imaginary' quite different from entertainment, or even challenge this cultural understanding of the casino. In this respect I particularly point to the categories, which will be discussed further on, of gambling addicts and professional gamblers. For them, casino gambling is not associated with leisure but rather with a psychic compulsion or even with hard labor.

5. Lived space: servicing and surveillance

For prominent aspects of the 'lived space', Lefebvre's third spatial dimension, of casinos we do not only have to think of gamblers, the customers of the casino. Also the casino personnel, in particular the croupiers, live in the casino and make up its space. In their everyday performance within the casinos they make their jobs meaningful and construct 'spaces of representation'. As mentioned before, lived space does not only refer to spatial practice but in addition also to the way this practice is tied to a certain 'social imaginary'. The integration of this dimension is essential to achieve a 'total space of engagement and presence' (Shields 1999, 164). In this paragraph I will discuss how croupiers deal with the idea of gambling for entertainment in their performances within the casino. This does not only involve the servicing but also the surveillance of gamblers in view of keeping off professional gamblers and addicts.

Servicing

The work of a croupier is built up from symbols, norms and etiquette, demanding big changeovers in the routines of daily life, from private related activities to work and vice-versa. Many croupiers refer to this switch as a complete transformation. This transformation is spatially accommodated and evolves step-by-step. The personnel rooms, especially the dressing room and

canteen, represent a transition zone between the croupier's private and professional life. This is where they prepare themselves for their task and where they can return to their normal selves during breaks and after hours. Using Erving Goffman's terminology, the personnel quarters can best be seen as the *back stage* to the *front stage* of the gambling floor, which, to many croupiers, does have a lot in common with a stage (Goffman 1959). Many of them do indeed compare their work with the performance of an actor.

The job of the croupier has clear regulations regarding outward appearances. The croupier's uniform is a *Holland Casino* tuxedo. The croupiers must look very well groomed and always have a polite smile ready. The actions, the physical language, the facial expressions and the use of voice on the gambling floor are prescribed in detail. The croupier's job is much ritualized. Opening a roulette or black jack table involves a specific ritual. All possible gambling and servicing actions have been practiced and enacted over and over again. During the game the croupiers have little latitude to deviate from the prescribed gestures and etiquette. There are with roulette, for example, strict rules for the course of the cylinder and the throwing of the bullet. The croupiers concentrate on their work and hardly talk to each other or to the guests. They exchange experiences during the breaks and in the canteen. To the untrained eye the croupiers effortlessly, automatically and flawlessly execute their duties. To guarantee this smooth operation the division of labor comprises a strict and hierarchic personal and electronic monitoring system.

Towards the gamblers the croupiers will keep their distance. A croupier will generally pretend not to know or recognize acquaintances from outside the casino; this is to avoid any appearance of favoritism. Croupiers concentrate on the game, and virtually all contact with gamblers passes through the game. The playing positions of the gambler and the croupier are relatively autonomous. The casino is very reserved when it comes to direct interactions between croupiers and gamblers, although they do occur sporadically. A croupier, for instance, comments upon this in reference to her training period:

> After a while it gets better as you learn to control the game. You also get to know the guests a little bit and become somewhat freer at the table. In the beginning you have no freedom at all. Especially during training, there is no room for any joking. On the floor, though, there is some joking. You don't learn that in training but then again, you can't really learn that. It all comes down to a feeling. You can't start out all loose and easy. You don't know the people you're dealing with and how they will react. If someone loses thousands of guilders you cannot joke around with him. (Croupier, cited in Kingma 2002, 369.)

Holland Casino even encourages a certain 'informalization' (Wouters 1986) in the interaction between croupiers and players. This is linked to the informalization of the dress code as discussed previously. The level of informalization depends on the situation, the customers and the croupier's personal skills and preferences. A croupier tells for instance:

> I like the Saturday night blackjack the best. The place is swamped. The guests are not very experienced which means you can have a bit of fun. These people really see you as a croupier. A regular visitor only sees you as someone who is taking their money. (...) The people that come in on Fridays and Saturdays really look at your skills, how you throw and draw, how fast and all. You can hear them whispering. That's nice. Then you make a little show out of it. (Croupier, cited in Kingma 2002, 370.)

Within *Holland Casino* there are different opinions on where to draw the lines. As appropriate behavior is measured by each individual situation, the common sense and the beliefs of the personnel are constantly relied upon to make their own appraisals. There is one exception to the rule that the croupiers, however flexible they may be in this, must keep their distance from the gamblers at all times. This is the practice of tipping, or as they say in the Dutch casinos, 'the tronc'. Due to the fact that their wages are partly dependent of the tips the croupiers lose some of their autonomy with regard to the gamblers. Therefore, tipping strategies are a sensitive subject that croupiers handle with care.

The tronc holds a historically unique position in the culture of casinos. The tronc originated in the early days of roulette, when croupiers almost solely depended on the generosity of gamblers. The ritual words *Merci pour les employés* are just as common at the table as *Faites vos jeux* and *Rien ne va plus*. When a group of new guests received an instruction of roulette, in one of my observations in the mid1990s (Holland Casino policies regarding tips now seem to be more strict), I listened in and the croupier was very clear about the meaning of the tronc, 'as this is where the wages of the croupiers are paid from' (he suggested that this was actually the only source for the wages). He also stated that tipping is part of the etiquette of roulette, and that it is therefore not acceptable to not tip. Every croupier has his ways and schemes to more or less subtly point out the custom of tipping, for instance reserving at least one share (once the stake) of the profit of a single number, a so-called *plein*, 'for the personnel'. There was a sharp distinction between the official policy of *Holland Casino*, i.e. the conceived space of tipping, and the lived space of tipping as experienced by this croupier:

> Officially the company states that 'there is no obligation for guests to tip', but that is not how it really works. If you are dealing with a guest that tips really badly you try to 'teach' them. You slide the stack towards him while stating loud and clear how many pieces they are. If he really refuses there are other ways. For example, you only pay him at the last moment. And if another guest tips you point to him, letting him know that this is the way to do it. You can even slide a large win towards him and push the stack over right in front of him … Some are more sassy at this than others. I won't really embarrass anyone. But these things happen. Afterwards we laugh about it in the canteen … These things are also a way of proving yourself to your colleagues. It is a bit of a sport. (Croupier, cited in Kingma 2002, 371)

Surveillance

The casino guards the game order with a security system that is unparalleled in the world of entertainment. Security as a primary concern is manifested clearly in the specialist security service. Still, the guards and their surveillance equipment are nothing more than the visible outer layer of a complete security system, which is deeply integrated with the design of the building, with the organization and with the company culture. In this respect the casino can very well be regarded as a 'panoptic space', a complex organizational design of spatial arrangements, behavioral norms and surveillance (Foucault 1975). For example, *Holland Casino* checks the 'antecedents' of all personnel. There also are strict rituals and procedures for the handling of money, chips and jetons, the transport and counting during table openings and in the counting room, for entering certain rooms, for the changing of the croupiers and the paperwork. The security staff is there to make sure that these regulations are followed strictly and surely. Breaking a rule will have serious consequences like summary dismissal for any form of theft. After all, the casino can be seen as a giant open slot machine, running on a large flow of transactions of which the outcome remains unknown until the counts. To monitor the cash flows the Dutch casinos make use of electronics where they can, for instance to register the money inside the slot machines, the counting machines at the American roulette tables and many video cameras observing every move of personnel and gamblers.

The most important effect of the security system is, according to management, not that it traces crime and thefts, which it effectively does in incidental cases, but that it has a preventive effect. Personnel and customers adhere to the rules because they know that they are under surveillance. The security measures are not so much meant to penalize offenders or exclude them from the casino, which only occurs sporadically in case of extreme breaches of the rules that subvert the casino. The purpose is to be able to intervene and correct at an early stage so that the individuals involved can return to the acceptable normative order of the casino. There are nevertheless performances and types of gamblers that are excluded from the casino, notably related to the extreme and threatening categories of professional and compulsive gamblers.

Professional gamblers constitute, just as cheaters and thieves, a burden to casinos. In particular black jack gives the gambler a statistical advantage to the house, and this also was the case in the Dutch casinos (Van der Genugten 1993). This advantage could only be actualized on the conditions that the gambler is very experienced, very concentrated and invests a lot of money and time in his or her 'work'. Black jack professionals are called 'card counters' because their strategies are based on counting the cards that are drawn in a game. In 1981 *Holland Casino* for the first time officially tried to keep away card counters by prohibiting the taking of notes during the games. In 1993 again a serious confrontation with card counters occurred, when the Amsterdam casino denied access to the *cercle privé* to a group of seven professionals. And in 1996 the international renowned card counter John Taramas, alias Johnny the Greek, pressed charges against *Holland Casino* and demanded compensation because of the warnings and gambling prohibitions issued against him by this company. Shortly after this incident the introduction of Automatic Card Shufflers at *Holland Casino* almost nullified the statistical advantages of black jack players. However, this does not mean that black jack players do not count cards any more, or indeed that strategies aimed at influencing the outcome of the games are absent in casinos. And I am not merely referring here to magical beliefs and superstition. Not all casino gamblers accept the game events as unpredictable and passively await the outcome. This has been clearly argued and demonstrated by David Oldman (1974) in a study of roulette in a British casino in the early 1970s. Oldman distinguishes between the ratio of the game and the ratio of the gambler, which resembles Lefebvre's distinction between conceived and lived space.

> Whilst the theory that formulates the game is drawn from mathematics (…), the theories that give the players ways of, and reasons for, playing are diverse and dependent upon the context of play, the players' location in a wider social structure, the social organization surrounding the play, and so on (Oldman 1974, 412).

Based on this distinction, Oldman clarifies a remarkable paradox at roulette, namely that while this game is designed as a game of chance, players can also play this game as if it requires a certain amount of skill. The suggestion that players can influence the outcome of the game is tied up with the culture of roulette. Oldman claims that two thoughts feed this suggestion: (a) one can recognize patterns in a series of numbers, and (b) the croupier can influence the course of the bullet. In any case the first suggestion is clearly supported by the Dutch casinos, where at every gaming table the last 20 numbers are displayed on an electronic screen.

Apart from professional gamblers, gambling addicts can also constitute a burden to casinos. This is because bad publicity can subvert the legitimacy of casinos. At *Holland Casino* individual gamblers have always had the option of a voluntary personal exclusion. In the early 1990s *Holland Casino* introduced more pro-active addiction policies in which casino personnel was trained to spot and caution compulsive gamblers, or 'problem gamblers' as gambling experts and casino operators prefer to call them (Rosecrance 1988). However, personnel and psychological experts agree that, apart from the obvious and dramatic cases, it is hard to fix gambling addicts unambiguously. Repeated or high financial losses are not a sufficient criterion. Furthermore, what appears to be compulsive behavior may have other than gambling-related causes. Inveterate addicts can moreover mask their addiction and behave like common gamblers. And an addict can ultimately always ignore the advice of casino personnel to take a personal exclusion, however urgent the advice may be. These observations indicate that a casino has perhaps strong options to correct behavior on the level of spatial practices but has only limited power over the fully lived space of gamblers.

Insofar as I referred in this paragraph to the rituals and official procedures of casino personnel, I have addressed the perceived and conceived space rather than the lived space of casinos. However, my point is that in the performance of servicing and surveillance casino personnel

charges these routines and procedures with values and meanings that go beyond, and can even contradict, official casino policies. I want to argue that the servicing and surveillance by casino personnel addresses and reveals certain aspects of the lived space within the Dutch casinos.

I suggest in particular that the discussed 'space of representations', those regarding informalization, tipping strategies, skill and addictive behavior, relate in two ways to the confinement of gambling as entertainment. First, all the discussed practices are regarded as *exceptions* to the rule of pure entertainment. These practices do not imply that informal interaction with croupiers, tipping strategies, influencing outcomes of the game or addiction are completely ruled out. Rather, the casino puts restrictions on these social imaginaries and performances regarding gambling. The discussed practices highlight the edges between what is and what is not acceptable behavior within the casino. This means that the casino and its personnel maintain a distance vis-à-vis gamblers, conceal tipping strategies, maintain the statistical advantages vis-à-vis the gambler, and that the casino renounces the deliberate exploitation of addicts. The exceptional status of these practices confirms that at *Holland Casino* gambling for fun is the dominant mode of experience.

Second, the practices related to informalization, tipping, skill and the exclusion of professionals and addicts should be understood as referring to *maximal standards*. In practice the casino enables more, but less pronounced, informal interactions, tips, profits, skill and addictive experiences than might be expected on the basis of discussions about these subjects. This is because most gamblers play for fun, tip voluntarily and do not bother to minimize their losses on the basis of rational calculations. Also in casino practice there is a greater addictive involvement in gambling than that which is evident with the problem gamblers who are confronted by the casino. This is because the casino can perhaps discourage some addicts but it cannot prevent (the genesis of) a complete devotion to gambling. The point here is that certain levels of informalization, tipping, skill and addiction are part of the idea of entertainment as the lived space of casino gambling. These practices represent values and meanings that can be invested in gambling but that are only allowed insofar as these meanings are confined to the space of the casino, and do not become consequential for the subsistence of the casino, the profession of the croupiers or the life world of gamblers. The discussed practices can be understood, in other words, as part of constructing 'simulations' or 'illusions' of, for instance, camaraderie or showdown with croupiers, illusions of skill and control over gambling and illusions of escape and relief.

6. Conclusion

In this article I have analyzed the spatial strategies regarding the segregation, confinement and concentration of gambling games within casinos, and how these strategies are involved in the social construction of gambling as entertainment. I suggested that the tight spatial control over casinos serves as a precondition for the expansion of casino markets. Casinos frame and guard, as we have seen in the case of Dutch casino space, gambling games as commercial entertainment. However, one could also reason the other way around, namely that the (re)definition of gambling as commercial entertainment, or the 'euphemization' of gambling, enabled the expansion of casino markets. This is because, as we have also seen, casino practice is influenced by developments in the wider society. I have analyzed this dialectic using Lefebvre's distinctions between 'spatial practice' (perceived space), 'representations of space' (conceived space) and 'spaces of representation' (lived space) (Lefebvre 1991; Shields 1999; Soja 1996). These dimensions always operate together, although the relative importance of these dimensions is context dependent and may vary over time (Shields 1999, 167). The Lefebvrian dimensions were understood as referring to the ontologically different ways organizational actors relate to space. The involvement of various groups of actors, related to the state, to casino operators or to consumers, were further analyzed in reference to Actor–Network–Theory (ANT) (Latour 1987; Lee and Hassard 1999).

Although many and interesting observations could be made about the relationships and complementary aspects of Lefebvre's spatial concepts and central ANT concepts, this theoretical objective was not a major concern of this article. My analysis was particularly directed at the spatial construction of gambling *as entertainment*, which in the contemporary condition stands out as the dominant cultural meaning associated with commercial gambling. In the concluding paragraphs, I want to discuss the ways in which the place-making of casinos is involved in the social (re)construction of gambling as entertainment.

First, a casino is not to everybody a well-defined and easily recognized entertainment facility they are constantly aware of. This makes the planning and architecture of casinos of great importance for the way casinos can be integrated in the everyday routines of customers, tourists and urban dwellers. I have suggested that the newly designed urban Dutch casinos of the 1990s reinforce the cultural meaning of entertainment because the glamorous architecture and theming (Gottdiener 2001) of the casinos first separates the gambling games from the urban environment, and thus dissociates for outsiders the casino from gambling, and second associates the casino with an urban environment designed for consumption and entertainment. This makes it relatively easy for those who have no specific knowledge of the history of the casino, or do not bother to investigate what exactly is going on behind the scenes, and do not explicitly reflect upon casino gambling, to simply follow this preconceived idea and perceive a casino as an entertainment facility. Of course, this does not mean that people are complete 'spatial dopes', or that 'entertainment' and 'fun' are their only options of interpretation. It does mean, however, that people to a certain extent routinely reproduce certain understandings of casinos which are only occasionally, under specific circumstances, explicitly questioned, (re)considered or (re)negotiated. It also means that entertainment is a dominant perception of casinos, and that this perception can be managed through spatial design.

Second, this understanding of the constructed or 'manipulated' character of entertainment in spatial design does not imply that entertainment can be conceived as a more or less self-evident and unambiguous concept, it rather renders 'entertainment' as a problematic concept that begs the question of what organizational actors mean by entertainment and how they incorporate entertainment in casino space. I have suggested that the Dutch casinos, in an obvious strategy aimed at the normalization of gambling, almost convulsively 'euphemize' gambling in linking it with the idea of entertainment. I have argued more specifically that the conceptual power strategies first set constraints on the conception of casinos and secondly 'inscribe' desirable behavior in gambling equipment and spatial arrangements. In its advertisements and other media representations, *Holland Casino* reduces a casino visit to an esthetic experience, and silences the gambling part. And upon accessing the casino this company informs visitors about the basic elements of its normative order, which are claimed to assure the 'guest' a 'pleasant outing' and make him or her aware of the 'dangers of gambling'. Furthermore, the carefully designed divisions and variations in gambling areas within the casino facilitate a 'culture of difference' in gambling behavior, creating a social arena and enabling the experience of luxury and risks for a wide range of social groupings. Again, all these discourses and conceptual normalization strategies by the casino organization do not imply that people more or less automatically behave according tot the idealized values and beliefs of the casino. However, it does mean that casino organizations exert considerable definitional power and influence the signification of gambling space. Following the logic of ANT the development of the new Dutch casinos went together with the 'translation' (Callon 1986, Latour 1987) of the casinos into the terms of the organizational actors and interests that are involved. They influence the exploitation of casinos causing the practice of casino gambling to gradually change. In this respect, the successful integration in the casino network of urban politics, post-modern architects, advertising specialists and new target groups of consumers, as well as responsible gambling policies, were of special significance.

Third, the full meaning of gambling as entertainment is only realized in the performance on the gambling floor of the casino. This not only includes the performance of gamblers but also the performance of casino personnel. I suggested in particular that servicing and surveillance addresses and reveals certain aspects of the 'lived space' of Dutch casinos. Casino personnel invests values and meaning in casino rituals and policies, first by exploring the edges between acceptable and not acceptable or excessive behavior, and second by developing new, maximal, standards for gambling as entertainment. In this way casino personnel shapes the normative order of casinos. It is worthwhile to stress that Foucault's notion of 'discipline' is not so much directed at restricting behavior as on the effects of restrictions (Foucault 1975), in our case the construction of gambling norms. Although Foucault in his work often stresses the negative strategies of punishment and restriction, positive strategies related to rewarding and permission should be regarded as equally significant. Casinos should in fact, and quite different from institutions like prisons or asylums, be regarded first and foremost as rewarding organizations. These consumptive facilities motivate and steer behaviors with an array of more or less subtle rewards, obviously through the occasional wins at the gambling games. In the strategies of informalization and tipping the croupiers flexibly manage the standards of interaction with gamblers. And in the skillful strategies of influencing the outcome of the game gamblers to a certain extent re-define a game of chance into a game of skill. Also, in discouraging a professional or addictive involvement in gambling, casino personnel set limits on these kinds of excessive experiences and performances inside the casino. However, the casino does not completely exclude all these experiences. On the contrary, within certain but not fixed limits, the casino assimilates these experiences in the concept of entertainment. They are part of the construction of 'illusions' in the experience of gambling, which, in line with Baudrillard's semiological spatial analyses (Baudrillard 1990), is for many perhaps better understood as a 'simulation' of gambling. Lefebvre's concept of 'lived space' seems particularly suited for highlighting such positive and imaginative aspects of casino space. In this respect Lefebvre's dialectic stresses the paradoxical relationship between casino space and entertainment. For, while the confinement of gambling in casinos enables and enhances gambling opportunities, this confinement at the same time euphemizes and softens gambling experiences, to gambling as a form of commercial entertainment.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the anonymous referees for their comments and Jim Cosgrave for his interest and for correcting some of my English.

Notes

1. 'Wet op de kansspelen', *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal*, 1972–1973, 1410 [Proceedings from Dutch Parliamant].
2. Holland Casino, *Reclamecode casinospelen*, Hoofddorp, maart 1991 [Advertising code Holland Casino].
3. Bernie IJdis, *A dreamscape – gambling in America*, Documentary, 1994.
4. Holland Casino, *Annual Report* 2005.

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